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ALBANIAN FARM OUTPUT UP; FOOD PRICES DOWN

HOXHA SCORES LAGGARDS IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION -- Bashkimi, No 1652, 11 Apr 50

In his report on agriculture before the Second Congress of the Albanian Workers' Party, held in Tirana on 10 April 1950, Enver Hoxha claimed only partial success for the fulfillment of the 1949 agricultural plan. He directed his severest criticism against Gaqo Tashko, Minister of Agriculture, and against Ramadan Xhangolli, Director of Agriculture of the Central Committee of the Albanian Workers' Party. He pointed out that the largest sector of Albanian agriculture is in the hands of private peasants. He scored the Ministry of Agriculture for its failure to make a serious study of the problems of modernizing and promoting Albanian agriculture and to make a proper land survey. Though the agrarian reform was supposed to have been completed, Hoxha complained that much land had not been distributed and remained ownerless and uncultivated. He cited as an example 2,000 hectares of land in the Fier district.

However, Hoxha pointed to a 10-percent increase in the planted area over 1948, or 45 percent as compared with 1938. Wheat production in 1949 was 100.8 percent of the planned quota and 138.77 percent of the 1948 figure. Corn production was only 77.54 percent of the planned figure because of floods in the north and drought in the Lushnje, Valona, and Berat districts; but the 1949 corn crop was 299.14 percent of the 1948 crop. Fodder production, he reported, reached 107.6 percent of the planned figure and 229.14 percent of the 1948 figure.

Hoxha pointed to the very low production of industrial plants, in both the state and private sectors, and ascribed this failure to a lack of incentive and to the price situation.

He praised the work of agricultural cooperatives, admitting that some were not properly organized and that kulak elements had entered some cooperatives. At Pojan, for example, the president of the cooperative was a kulak.

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The President stated that the cultivation of industrial plants was the chief problem of Albanian agriculture, and that cotton was the most important of these crops. He described the Albanian climate as suitable for the growth of cotton, and pointed out the advantages of its cultivation to the Albanian farmer, who now must pay a high price for imported cotton goods, as well as its suitability for export. He stated that cotton would be the principal raw material used by the large "Stalin" Combine which is now under construction with Soviet aid.

During 1949, Hoxha continued, the Albanian government suffered economic losses because of the mishandling of livestock by state farm personnel, which caused all the animals to lose weight when they were brought to market. Although the meat from government-owned cattle was offered for sale at a lower price than meat sold by private butchers, the people preferred to buy the latter, because of its superior quality.

Because of the failure of the Albanian economy to meet its 1949 production plan, Albania was unable to meet her export obligations and was obliged to ask for new credits, according to President Hoxha.

He referred to the lack of trained technicians which has been hindering Albanian economic progress, expressing the hope that the problem would be solved when the hundreds of Albanian youth who have gone to study technical and scientific subjects in schools of higher learning in the USSR and People's Republics complete their studies. Hoxha reported that hundreds of technicians had been trained in Albania and that thousands of qualified workers had completed short on-the-job courses.

According to the President, figures for the first quarter of 1950 indicate laundry soap production of 100 percent, textiles 110 percent, leather 121.9 percent, shoes 113.5 percent, and lumber 101.5 percent.

Hoxha pointed to decreases of 62.5 percent in the price of meat during the first quarter of 1950, butter 55.56 percent, cheese 48.91 percent, milk 39.68 percent, olive oil 57.5 percent, vegetables 79.31 percent, potatoes 37.5 percent, sugar 28.57 percent, macaroni 20 percent, beans 34 percent, linen 20 percent, silk 28 percent, domestic liquor 22 percent, marmalade 20 percent, and eggs 20 percent.

CUT FOOD COSTS -- Dielli, No 5928, 17 May 50

Since the prices of goods were lowered on 1 April, the buying and selling turnover in Tirana, Elbasan, and other places has increased 50 percent.

According to the latest reports, in Tirana one kilogram of fat costs 280 lek, as compared with the previous price of 300 lek; grape jam costs 80 lek instead of 90; butter costs 450 lek instead of 700; and potatoes cost 10 lek instead of 20 to 25 lek per kilogram.

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